

Confirmation and the RCIA (4/23/18)

(See the *Code of Canon Law* cc.882-888; RCIA National Statutes #28; also see *Priest Faculties for the Diocese of Davenport* 3.1, 4.5, 4.10)

Pastors and parochial vicars, by law, may confirm in the following circumstances:

1. When the person was never a Catholic:
 - a. *When he baptizes an adult (defined as anyone who has reached the age of discretion, about 7 years old), and*
 - b. *When he receives a previously baptized non-Catholic into full communion.*
2. If the person was a Catholic and left the Church:
 - a. *When he readmits into full communion a previously baptized Catholic who apostacized (whether by formal act or just by practice) from the faith, and*
 - b. *When he readmits into full communion a baptized Catholic who through no personal fault was instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion.*

Confirmation in such cases should take place at Mass, usually on a Sunday, so that the person may complete Christian initiation by participating fully in the Eucharist (c. 884, §1; RC 8, 13).

The usual minister of confirmation is the Bishop. However, in our diocese, pastors (and those like them in the law) are also granted the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics who are over the usual age of confirmation in the parish, should a serious need arise. This means that pastors (and those like them) may also confirm baptized Catholics (a) *who were not raised as Catholic but who never belonged to any other church* OR (b) *who have never left the Church but were never confirmed*. The pastor can subdelegate this faculty to others (for example, a parochial vicar).

Those who are not pastors (and those like them) or parochial vicars must have the faculty to baptize or receive adults into the Church, and confirm them, delegated to them by the Bishop. It may not be subdelegated by the pastor (or other priest). For example, a letter requesting permission to baptize/receive and confirm must be requested by any priest who is not a pastor or parochial vicar (or a chaplain who has the same faculties as a pastor) and who is presiding at the Easter Vigil.

Outside of the danger of death (see Faculty 1.7), any priest who wishes to confirm a baptized catholic between 7 and the usual age of confirmation must obtain the permission (delegation) of the bishop.

In order to respect the integrity of the three Sacraments of Initiation, the priest who presides over Eucharist and Confirmation is also the one who is to baptize. Therefore, another minister (e.g., a deacon or even another priest) must not baptize in this situation (see c.883.2; for an exception if large numbers are involved, see RCIA # 226). Also, priests who will be presiding at the Easter Vigil outside the territory of their assignment, or if they are not assigned a pastoral charge, need the explicit (and not merely tacit) permission of the one in whose territory they are baptizing (pastor) in order to baptize (see canons 530 & 862) and confirm (see c.887).

Finally, according to the law of the Church, children who have reached the use of reason (around 7 years of age) are considered, for the purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults. Therefore, if someone who is to be baptized or received into the Catholic Church is deemed ready (i.e., old enough) to receive Eucharist they are to be confirmed.